

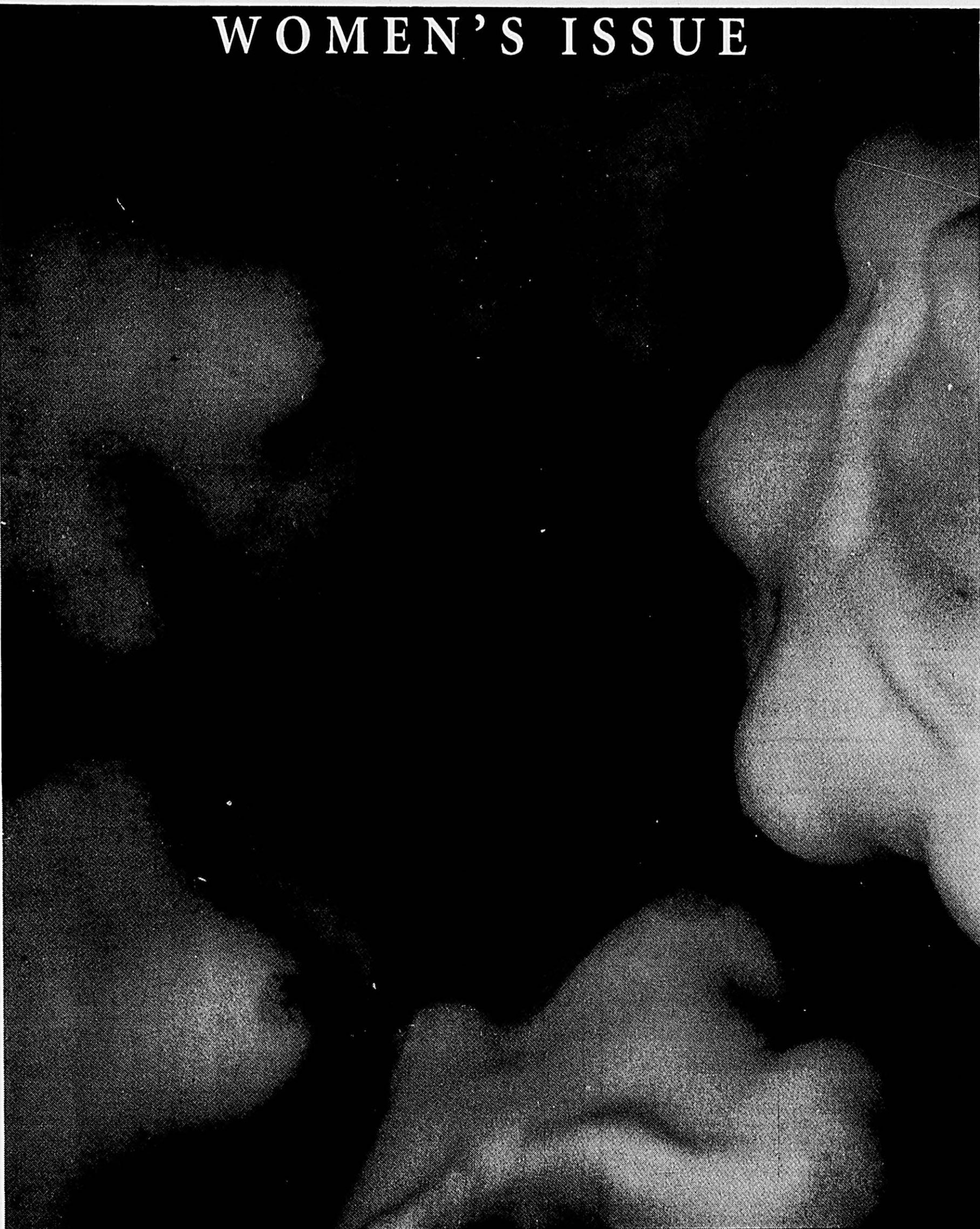
THE MCGILL DAILY

Volume 80, Number 77

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Thursday, March 7, 1991

WOMEN'S ISSUE



**“Nice boobs...
shame about the shoes.”**



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menstruation
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Movement needs a narrative.

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as men to be thought
as good. Fortunately
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in the Bathroom just because
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YOU KNOW WHAT THEY
SAY IN NASHVILLE...

The higher the hair,
the closer to God
- K.D. Lang

There will be
sex after death: it'll be
just what we need to feel it.
We just won't be able to feel it.
Lily Tomlin

COMMENT

Beyond the boob thing

We hear a lot of criticism leveled at our generation by an earlier group of feminists who say we've dropped the project.

Younger feminists may be redefining the project, but the basic concerns of women remain the same. This time, non-white, non-hetero, non-middle class feminists are directing the movement, connecting women with other groups marginalized by the gulf between

rich and poor.

But we have a sense of humour, in fact we have many senses of humour. Women are playing with the myths and playing with 'objectification' and it has a place.

However, violence and threats against our safety don't.

As women in university, we face increasing rates of violence and rape on our campuses and in our city. Signs of a male backlash against the

women's movement crop up daily as men bond to reclaim an authority we simply don't recognize anymore.

Meantime, the methods and models of women's groups get co-opted and finally legitimized by the likes of Robert Bly and his merry band of 'open-minded', 'sensitive' men. Even the word 'feminism' has been bought and sold at all the major marketplaces: the public

service, the corporate sector, and schools.

But a watered-down feminism that can live alongside continuing poverty and denial of women's rights just doesn't cut it.

Feminism is more than affirmative action for nice kids' professional mothers and more than training for our New Age brethren.

We love our bodies and our sexuality. We hate to be silenced

and we won't stand being hurt. Yet we know that empowerment is one of those words like self-esteem, a word that's hard to apply in our everyday lives.

That doesn't stop us from organizing, protesting and challenging the work done by our comrades.

Monica Brennen
Pauline Chakravarty
Margie Borschke
Heather MacKay

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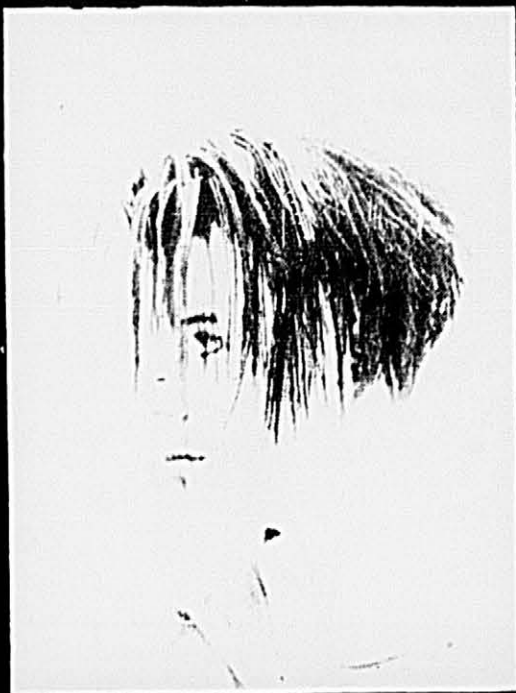
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Metaphors of war silence women

The Daily: How do you conceive and perceive the war in the Gulf?

Costandi: Although I do not condone the occupation of Kuwait, I do not see the war as legitimate. The Gulf War is a war that has been waged in the name of morality, in the name of democracy and freedom by governments who are very far from upholding these very same values in analogous situations.

The Palestine question is the best example, and that is why the American government has refused to make the 'linkage' because the truth of its failure to apply the same standards of justice in similar situations glares in its face. The whole paradigm of the 'new world order' does not hold water in the Arab mind, because the Palestinians have been waiting 23 years for the UN to implement with the same fervour, enthusiasm and firmness the UN resolutions for the withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank and Gaza strip.

So one starts to question the fervour, enthusiasm and firmness to 'liberate' Kuwait. The American economy was in bad shape, something drastic was needed to divert the attention from internal problems like unemployment, illiteracy, the homeless and drugs. The war, which was fabricated and calculated to the last detail, was the answer.

Perhaps typical of any war-time scenario, the Gulf War was on the whole depicted in black and white terms: good versus evil. This simplicity allowed the coalition forces to evade both the issue of linkage and national interest. Where does this simplicity stem from? How is it that a devastating war is so easily justified?

I find Joseph Campbell's words so relevant here. I mean we have to ask ourselves: Are we still living in the age when tribes used to use the language of fighting to resolve their differences? Do we see the world only in terms of 'victor' or 'victorious' and 'vanquished'? Campbell suggests that if we are to be true sharers and true participants in what is authentically human, then we have to abandon our tribal and sectarian mentalities and let go of our egos. Only then can we be true brothers and sisters using a universal language.

The language used to describe this war is amazing when you examine it closely. It reflects a mentality which sees the world as 'the frontier versus the savages', the civilized versus the degenerate. If this is so we don't have much hope of living with the Other. We don't have much hope that we can co-exist with other nations on the basis of equity. We don't have much hope for this planet earth if war, killing and plundering are the only metaphors we are able to envision and use!

The West, particularly the American media, uses words like democracy, freedom and justice. But in the Arab mind these resonate hollowness, or rather the sound of brutal bombing and shelling, and the indiscriminate killing of civilians, and the void of annihilation that follows the killing.

The West now talks of reconstruction. The Western economy may now thrive on the contracts for buildings. But this is so far removed from the real reconstruction, or rather the creating of social structures that will be able to heal and absorb the destruction. My question is, can they reconstruct the raped souls of people, or the disillusioned minds, the demoralized characters, and the wounded spirits?

Samia Costandi is a graduate student of Philosophy and Religion in Education at McGill. A vocal critic of the conventional understanding of war, she spoke with the Daily last week about the war in the Gulf, as an Arab Canadian woman.

by Pauline Chakravartty



DAILY PHOTO: KATERINA CIZEK

Samia Costandi: "What arrogance, and what delusive language and what twisted logic, on the part of the American government to be giving people freedom this way."

If it is a question of language, what will it take for the West to see this? What will it take for the language to break down?

Gabriel Moran's book *Religious Education as Second Language* comes to mind. He says that meaning is not something that is lodged in words. The images that govern our language are what need to be attended to. Moran suggests that the definitions of words reflect the success of one group being able to speak to humanity. An important point is that very often it is not on the basis of scholarly argument but out of moral response to a grave injustice that language is given rebirth.

That is exactly when the language of war will break down, when the people in the West and the East simultaneously start challenging the moral pretexts of their governments and start responding to the grave injustices that their governments are perpetuating. Furthermore, Moran argues that "at other times (language) can generate extraordinary violence accomplished with seeming

innocence in the name of the sacred cause of liberty."

Thus, to the Arab, 'democracy' and 'freedom' connote images of oppression and subjugation when uttered by the President of the U.S. The true meaning of these words does not lie in the empty rhetoric that Arabs hear on American media, but rather lies latent in the creative stirring of an individual or group that can retrieve the meaning, as Moran says, for the Arab people.

How does the patriarchal language of war affect you as an Arab woman?

I, as an Arab woman of Palestinian origin, feel infuriated when I hear the words used by the American government, because I know how far removed the meanings that they imbue the words with are from the reality of my people. These are words that under the guise of a good cause incur destruction and injustice.

We live in what Elisabeth Dobson Gray calls twisted mind frames and conceptual

mind traps. The language helps to perpetrate the patriarchal world order. The patriarchal world we live in has sought continuously to justify its claim to knowledge and truth through the institution of those attributes it has deemed virtuous.

Words like 'rationality' and 'objectivity' have been exalted through the ages, since Newton. The concept of knowledge or the truth as reached by reason put rationality and objectivity on a pedestal, and put feelings or the ability to intuit on a much lower scale. Emotions, and thereby the intellectual worth as it were of women, were looked down upon. Words like compassion lost their meaning when the schism between the mind and the heart developed, and compassion, for example, was misunderstood for pity.

I see much the same thing happening now in the Gulf War. The cowboy mentality of being 'tough' and not 'wimps' allows the coalition forces to talk in terms of "quick decisive victories." A 'decisive victory' at whatever cost implies no respect for human life, for the environment, and no compassion for the innocent who die.

How will these innocent people, the ones who survived the war, be affected? Will the poor, the children and the women continue to be silenced by this language of war and now victory?

You are right in naming women and the poor together because they form those sectors of society that are most oppressed and most silenced. As an Arab woman, I can tell you that the poor masses in the Arab countries as well as the women will be most affected. Whatever strides they have achieved in their struggle to free themselves of bondage, their attempt to achieve their own democratization process, will now be undermined by this new phase of enslavement, if I may call it that. The Arab world has now been thrown decades behind.

The American media does not talk about the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in Egypt, Tunisia, Algiers, Jordan and Yemen. It does not report the story of Lubna Nasser Kaddah, who was standing at the doorstep of her house in the West Bank, holding her one month old baby trying to breathe some fresh air when an Israeli patrol car passed by.

Since it was past the curfew time and she was supposed to be inside her house, the Israeli patrol simply shot her, just like that, one bullet to her heart that struck her dead. No question, no answer, no dialogue, no compassion or tolerance. How despicable! Victorious over whom? Over what? About 90 000 Iraqis have been killed in this bloodbath in the name of freedom and democracy. The late eminent Northrop Fry wrote: "The democratic ideal...is intended to provide the conditions of freedom, but freedom itself is an experience, not a condition, and only the individual can experience freedom."

I wonder, have the Iraqi people, or all the Arab people for that matter, been allowed to experience their own freedom? Will the Iraqi people, after their country has been totally devastated and its infrastructure destroyed, have the chance to experience anything but humiliation, degradation and total loss? What arrogance, and what delusive language, and what twisted logic on the part of the American government to be giving people freedom this way.

Samia Costandi will be speaking March 21, 18h30 in Thomson House.



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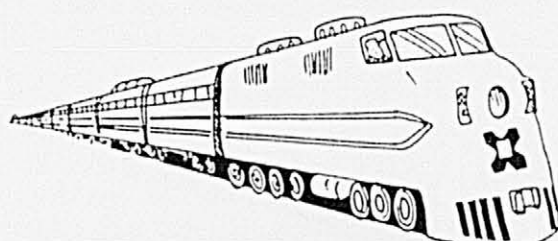
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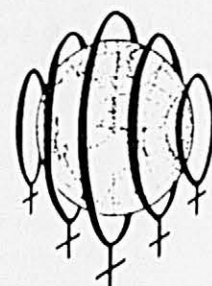
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Women in prison fast for rights

by Monica Brennan

On Monday, ten women in the Kingston Federal Prison for Women began a Hunger strike "to the death."

The women have been locked in segregation since a protest last month following the death of a native woman in the prison. Twenty-three year old native prisoner Lorna Jones was the sixth native woman to attempt suicide in the prison in the past eighteen months.

Since the February 6 "riot", Prison Warden Mary Cassidy has suspended a number of programs for native inmates. Three of the four employees of Kingston's Native Liaison Service were denied access. These workers provided counselling for the inmates.

Jeanette Chartrand, was also banned. She had been coordinator of the drug and alcohol abuse program for natives and provided one on one counselling for victims of sexual abuse.

The bans have left native women at the prison without essential support network and community services. Research by Fran Sugar and Lana Fox reveals that "27 of the 39 aboriginal women interviewed described experiences of childhood violence: rape, regular sexual abuse...21 had been raped or sexually assaulted either as a child or as adults."

"The prison is attempting to punish these women," said Theresa Eagle of the Kingston Committee for International Women's Day. Eagle has been visiting women at the prison over the last year.

The ten prisoners now fasting have pledged not to take food, water or medication.

"This may be the heavy price we women may have to pay to resist our oppressors," said one prisoner.

Through the Walls, a prisoners' support radio program, called the women political prisoners. "They are fighting for survival and human rights inside the prison walls and to

secure justice for their sisters everywhere."

Prison officials say they are aware of only one demand sent to the warden, "to secure a temporary absence pass for one of the women held in segregation so that she may visit her mother who is currently near death from cancer."

The pass had already been granted to the women but was revoked by the warden following her placement in segregation.

Dennis Curtis, prison spokesperson, described this "as nothing unusual."

But other demands broadcast for the women by *Through the Walls*, include an independent review of the conditions of women in the prison and the effects of the Canada's penal system on women as a whole.

"By independent the wimmin mean outside of the 'correctional services and the solicitor general, in fact independent of the criminal (un)just system as it now exists," said the service.

Prison official say they have not heard of this demand.

According to Maryse Pesant, Press Secretary for Solicitor General Pierre Cadieux, "Cadieux is aware of the hunger strike but has made no public statement."

Pesant said it is up to the prison's warden to decide whether or not the woman will get a pass.

But Curtis said the prison has not even considered granting the first demand. The hunger strike is "nothing to become alarmed about," he said.

What goes in can't get out

The prison has attempted to control what information gets beyond the prison walls, said Eagles.

The media has been denied interviews with the women in segregation and the women in the Native

Sisterhood. Prisoners have also been disciplined for their efforts to publicise the event.

Eagles also said she suspects that the phone calls by the women of A range are being monitored and that their freedom to talk about what is going on within the walls is limited by the threat of administration disciplining.

Kingston Whig Standard Journalist Paulette Peirol said inmates who have spoken to the media have been disciplined.

"The staff has revoked privileges to visit spouses as well as temporary unescorted day passes," said Peirol.

Outside supporters also say they have found their access to information restricted by prison officials. Many women and Native workers on the outside who have told the story of the Range A blockade have subsequently been denied access to the prison.

Eagle, herself of Mic Mac origin, was banned from the prison after she publicly supported the women prisoners. She said, "the warden told me they were reviewing my access and that I should have approved my statement with the prison before speaking to the press."

After publishing an article about the 'resistance' in the *Whig Standard*, Peirol was also denied access to the prison. When she discovered that other writers were allowed in to speak to inmates Peirol confronted the warden. The prison administration admitted that their decision was a reaction to her article and has now retracted her ban.

Last Saturday, *Through the Walls*, was also banned from the air by Queen's University's CFRC. The announcers said that the station told them their program was "compromising the stations quality, and had they had used the slot too much for advocacy programming rather than objective news report-

ing."

When contacted, the manager of CFRC refused to comment saying the program's cancelling was "an internal matter."

Through the Walls is concerned about being cut. "The program is vital because it is the only way people can get in contact with other people within the prison and that people in the prison can communicate with the public," said one announcer.

"people's lives depend on the show and it is important for the women in the prison to know we are out here in solidarity with them."

Despite the ban, *Through the Walls* has continued their public campaign on behalf of the Women of A range. They have sent out information packages to radio stations and women's groups across the country. On Monday they began a rotating hunger strike of solidarity and have published further demands in conjunction with the ones asked for by the Prisoners.

These include that all charges be dropped against 20 women charged after the blockade, the immediate release of the women in segregation, and the reinstatement of all programs that had been stopped to native prisoners, and that all women who are incarcerated for acts of self-defense against abusive individuals have their cases re-opened.

The Aboriginal Women's Council of Canada has issued a press release calling for the reinstatement of Native programs, the appointment of four aboriginal women to sit on the National Advisory council to the Solicitor General, consultation by the Warden with the Aboriginal Women's Council before any actions taken on aboriginal women in the prison, and the setting up of a community release centre for aboriginal women to fulfill their sentences.

Natives abused

by Monica Brennan

"How many more women are going to die in there before something is done?" Theresa Eagle asked.

Twenty-five to thirty per cent of inmates at the Federal Prison for Women are native women, while aboriginal people comprise only three percent of Canada's total population.

"If I could have one wish, I hope and dream that women could come here to heal, but no one can heal in the P for W, we are locked in cages and forgotten," said one native woman prisoner.

The high rate of suicide among native women in prison is alarming. "Suicide is not common in native culture so prison officials should be asking themselves why it is occurring," said Eagle of the International Women's Day Committee in Kingston.

On February 5, 1991, 23 year old Lorna Jones was found hung in her cell. She was due to be released in August.

The day after Jones was found dead, the woman on her block attempted to negotiate with prison officials to have the day off from work to mourn her death. The officials refused and warned the women would be charged if they didn't go to work.

"Prison officials wanted everything to go back to normal as soon as possible," said Eagles.

On February 6, during a native "sweat" ceremony, two of the women of the Native Sisterhood had a dispute with a Native Liaison worker who was leading the circle. Instead of containing the two women the guards ordered all 113 women back to their cells and to close down.

The women refused to go back into their cells and began barricading A Range (the area of the prison where Lorna had been and an area which is mostly occupied

by aboriginal women).

The prisoners say the disruption could have been avoided if prison officials had answered their only demand, a request to see Ellen Moves-Camp, one of the women's spiritual leaders.

Eagles has a recording of the resistance made by one of the inmates and smuggled out of the jail last week. On it the women were saying, "Give me Ellen my spiritual leader and I will go to the cell and lock."

According to Eagles, Warden Mary Cassidy replied "we are not giving in to your demands."

Prison officials have described the incident as a "riot." However the women refer to it as resistance.

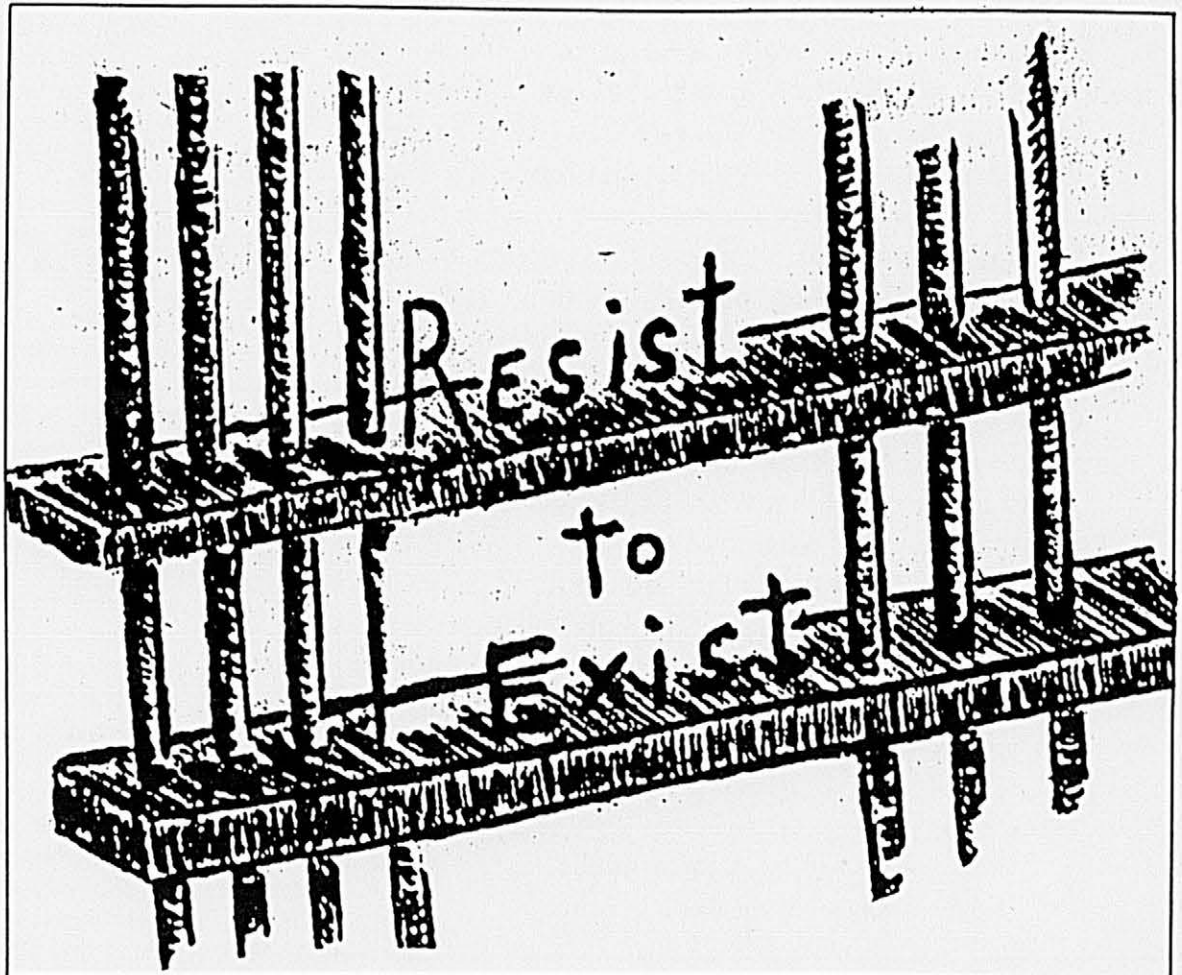
"This was their act of resistance to the oppression of their lives — and has a clear political dimension to it. It was not random violence as the prison crats say; it was clearly a case of native and women's struggle for survival and dignity," stated *Through the Walls*, a prison support radio show.

Following the Warden's refusal, the penitentiary's emergency response team was called in, they used two German Shepherd dogs and a canister of gas to control the women. The prisoner's eyes were sprayed with mace.

Documents printed by *Through the Walls* state that, "All the women were maced, thrown into cold showers and dragged into segregation. Here Native women were left naked while the white women were apparently given clothes."

Ten women who were seen as the instigators were placed in segregation cells and more than eighty charges were laid against a total of twenty prisoners.

Dennis Curtis, Ontario spokesperson for Canadian Correctional Services, said the charges included destruction of property, refusal to obey orders and making threats.



Unlikely company

by Jane Kubke

In a decidedly sexist industry with rigorous standards of youth and beauty, director Cynthia Scott's film featuring seven old women lost in the Laurentians, seems an unlikely hit.

The Company of Strangers, produced through the National Film Board, is remarkable precisely because it manages to magically transform the real lives of seven older women into a beautiful, compelling movie.

Inspired by an expedition to Montréal's Golden Age Centre while casting for another project, Scott said she was overwhelmed by the energy she witnessed. She decided a film about old people would be perfect for the NFB Alternative Drama Program—a series that puts non-actors in lead roles.

Once that decision was made, however, Scott and her collaborators travelled down some false paths before arriving in Ste-Jovite. Initially hundreds of men and women auditioned, but Scott ultimately decided to make a film exclusively with women.

"The fact is that, over the age of 70, for every man there are five women. In their real lives, they're not living amongst men at all," said Scott.

In the auditions, where men and women were required to act in little scenarios, "the man would immediately think it was his duty to be strong and take over the scene, and these women would immediately defer to them and lose their whole personality."

Scott resisted the obvious temptation to film yet another battle of the sexes. "I discovered that I could get much closer to the women if there was no man around. The whole tone of the film is very feminine. Of course there was worry about it—'My God, no one's going to want to see this movie. It's not going to fly!'" she said.

Fly it did, however, thanks largely to the enchanting cast of women portraying themselves: Alice Diabo, Constance Garneau, Winnie Holden, Cissy Meddings, Mary Meigs, Catherine Roche and Beth

Webber. While casting, Scott focused on the combination of women.

"We were certainly looking for an interesting mix, and by that I don't mean tokenism. We didn't have a list, but I knew I didn't want all white, middle-class, university educated women." The crucial quality, however, was what Scott terms 'inner integrity'.

"They never faked being anything other than they were. Either through innocence or a lack of guile, they always were themselves," said Scott.

The film originally had a script, but the women never saw it. "I knew that if I started making them memorize lines it would have had a phoniness to it. You would have felt it. The wonderful stuff where they start telling each other about their own selves, that's always completely coming from them."

Though initially shy and apprehensive, Scott said the women quickly developed a sense of camaraderie. "They were like a group of old cowboys or something. Everybody loved them."

They took their roles as spokespersons for the elderly seriously, however. "They knew they were performers and they knew they were making a movie that would honour old people."

The film addresses some of the difficult and painful issues which old people, and old women in particular, must face, like loneliness, death, and physical aging. The weight of these issues is often diffused through hilarious sequences of the women laughing at themselves.

"We knew this film would be awful if it wasn't full of fun. I don't mean we wanted to pretend that old age is perfect and terrific. We certainly don't do that."

Scott's philosophy is that if you fill the screen with old faces, you'll forget they are old and just see them as full human beings. For this reason, the women are deliberately removed from society and placed in an environment which puts them front row centre.

"We all have old people in our lives who we love and we think of as important, but



people, and as long as they don't get in our way, we'll put up with them, but they are in general, outside of those few people we know, they are often in the corners, and they aren't important. They are fringe

not revered or respected, they don't have any power at all. In this movie you have some sense of their wonderful potential."

The warmth and respect with which the women treat one another in *The Company*

of *Strangers*, shows them in their interactions. "is what the movie's about: are with each other."

Art women sing Maha

by Margie Borschke

Maha is a Hindi word meaning great/grand woman and mother. It seemed an appropriate name for a group of 20 women, mostly artists, who wanted to get together and sing. So, in affiliation with Oboro Gallery, they formed Choeur Maha.

While many choirs are simply collections of voices, this choir voices opinions which shape the ensemble itself. The group includes professional singers, dancers, visual artists and writers. Choeur Maha's artistic diversity, combined with its all-women membership, makes it unique among choral groups.

Kathy Kennedy, a professional singer with a masters in Classical Music from Western, is the choir's artistic director. She said, "It's more like being a chairperson in an artistic collective." Decisions are made

by consensus and everyone has a say, a situation Kennedy said is "very different from other choirs."

"We're interesting chorally. Since we are women, and each of us is concerned with different issues, this affects our choice of subject matter, what we do with the proceeds, etcetera," said Kennedy.

Diversity also affects the group's artistic product, as Kennedy points out, "We are a group with a lot of people accomplished in the arts. Women who are involved in different milieu and have a lot of say about how things are done."

While the group is newly formed, the singers have entertained thoughts about the future. "We hope to continue with something that expands into movement," Kennedy said, adding that among the group's members are several professional

choreographers.

Choir member Jim the group is a positive women get together that sounds together. We there are no differences we're singing."

Choeur Maha will to celebrate International with Gospel, African, as well as Kennedy's Proceeds from volunteer be donated to the Co Shelters. The concert ginning of a music s Kennedy.

The performance to 20h at La La La Stud 3rd floor. For more Oboro Gallery 844-32

Silverman's construction

by Margie Borschke

Subjectivity has long been a concern in feminist theory. Historically, the subject is the being who constructs the surrounding world, and itself in the process. 'It' is usually a man.

In contrast, women have been relegated to the role of the 'other', a position defined by the subject to be what the subject is not. This has been a central target for feminist movements.

But recently male subjectivity has become the subject of choice for many feminist theorists, raising eyebrows in the ranks of feminist scholars.

Feminists have spent years picking apart academic traditions to show how scholarship has been the scholarship of men. The exercise has for the first time introduced women into traditional discourse.

So why, many ask, would feminist

theorists now want to talk about male subjectivity?

Those who have taken up the task reply that the study of male subjectivity is important to feminist scholarship if it is true that equality between the sexes will require changes of both genders.

Such conflicts as sexual assault and conjugal violence affect the lives of each and every woman in a very real way. If male subjectivity, the masculine perception of the self, fetters the emancipation of women and by extension society, it is an important construct for feminist theorists.

Kaja Silverman, English professor at Rochester University, spoke to a crowd at McGill last week, as part of a series entitled "The Seen and the Said: Feminist Perspectives on the Construction of the Subject in Contemporary Culture."

Silverman's lecture, "Ideology and

Masculinity," was an upcoming book on Masculinity, focused on the ideological research.

Her work is an attempt to rethink ideology via psychoanalysis. She examined the relationship between symbolic order and the subject, a marxist concept terms the 'dominant fiction'.

The thrashing out of debate focused on ideas drawing upon Freud, Lacan, and Hurst, demonstrating influences on Silverman's move between complex

The last speaker in the Spigel from the University of "The Suburban Home" American Television," Arts W215.

Because woman's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get the sack and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get bashed we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we an't get a "real" man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect community care for children we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and "unfeminine" and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion and... for lots and lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement.

— from a leaflet produced by the National Union of Students in Britain

Eating dinner novels

by Melanie Rock

The difficulties women face in our society are bread and butter for many psychiatrists. In the past decade, eating disorders have exploded as the "new" women's problem for psychiatrists to explain and solve.

The most frequently published theorists are almost always middle-aged men, though over 90 per cent of bulimics and anorexics are young women.

According to psychiatrists, refusal to eat, bingeing and purging mean chaos. But at the same time, a woman's behavior is thought to represent misdirected efforts to take control of her life. Psychiatrists assume the patient's compliance in the clinical ideal of order.

No wonder the key word is *control* in psychiatric explanations of women's problems with food; the psychiatrist takes control of the woman who they claim has lost control.

The basic premise of professional psychiatry is that so-called problems can only be attacked once a doctor has dug up their origins within the individual.

But emotions emerge in conversation and conflict. The often problematic relationship women have with food is bound up in the social roles they are expected to assume and may have difficulties avoiding.

Academics don't speak of this, but in novels this world is recreated. Canada's two Margarets, Atwood and Laurence, wrote about the significance of food in women's lives when psychiatrists—mostly men—were still oblivious to the issue.

Atwood published *The Edible Woman* in 1969. As heroine Marian MacAlpin pursues middle class conformity she is less able to eat. Her body first rejects steak, then a soft-boiled egg, and finally an innocent carrot stick.

But Atwood's motif is not so much one of control as of suffering. Constant hunger is a silent, gnawing condition her body withstands in the strain to be a conventional woman without her own life.

In Laurence's *The Fire Dwellers* (also 1969), Stacey MacAindra makes her body the focus of her discontent. At cocktail parties she spills out of her clothes, straining at the seams of her dresses. And once she starts drinking she can't keep to her "proper place."

The needs and traumas of her family regiment each day, and Stacey feels guilty for her desire to escape. Her responsibilities, like Marian's restricted existence, make her hunger.

Novels like the *Edible Woman* and *The Fire Dwellers* run counter to the discourse of psychiatric experts. Instead of emphasizing control, they focus on the suffering women experience in the circumscribed circumstances they operate in.

Fictionalized commentary on the relationship between food and women contrasts with the void of female voices in academic social analysis. As novelists, women bypass the institutional treadmill that so often does not integrate their needs and experiences. And novels are more accessible than convoluted academic treatises.



Cycle Sluts rock on video

by Jill Armstrong

Girl rock bands haven't always been great. Can you name four off the top of your head? How about the Go-Go's, Heart, The Bangles and Wilson Phillips. Or better yet, how about Babes in Toyland, The Lunachicks, Vixen and The Cycle Sluts From Hell!

Chicks are working hard to make decent music, but it all comes down to image. In the creative domain of the rock video, you used to have two choices if you were a woman.

You could hang spreadeagle on an upsidown cross, or you could gyrate wildly in front of and around a man. Which would you choose? Women have since gotten off the cross and moved away from the hunk. But these advances are only a start.

Take the reigning princesses of pop, Wilson Phillips. They're tender yet just a tiny bit risqué. You'd think there were only two sirens in the group though, because you never see the fat one. Their managers probably broke it to them gently, "OK, if she has to be in the band, she can be the musical one in front of the piano."

Women in video have followed the same lame trail that men did. Symbolism run rampant, stylized images and sex are the predominant trends. Maybe chicks figured, well if men are exploiting our bodies, we might as well exploit theirs. So, one now finds muscular, toned and tanned male bodies replacing the women as object.

Those muscular chests have bored many to near tears in the interim. Truth be told, the male body just isn't as interesting as the female body, which has inevitably returned to the spotlight.

But just like the female groups of the early 70s, (The Slits, The Runaways) today's chicks are still trying to prove they can be taken seriously in rock & roll.

If you are a chick thinking about starting a band, here is one simple rule. Dress like

a slut. There are definite positive angles to looking like a slut and being in a band. Guys won't treat you like a bimbo or a bore and better yet, you'll look like you don't really care what the fuck they think.

The image of power connected to rock & roll operates in full effect here. Chicks are taking traditional power structures and switching them around so women are dominant, not dominated. In a recent *SPIN* article, a member of the all-girl thrash band DICKLESS put female power into perspective: "Women have taken over. Now they can get head instead of give head."

SPIN calls the new trend of chick thrash/metal bands FOXCORE. The problem with the Foxcore image is that the chicks don't play any instruments—a slight oversight in the music industry.

One of the best documentaries of all time was done on the underground metal scene in Los Angeles. *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years* was made by a woman, a chick in the know in the rock & roll world.

One local female banger said she wanted to be a rock star (they all did) and that she wanted to show the world that girls can "rock just as hard" as guys. A lot of women want this, but it's hard for women to be seen in the same framework as men, especially in metal.

The Cycle Sluts From Hell are four badass looking chicks on vocals with a male dominated band playing behind them. What is that? Sure, Joan Jett uses male musicians, but she also plays lead guitar.

Chicks of the world—get with it! Start learning the guitar or drums or whatever and when you have, make sure that you can play better than the Bangles or else you're in trouble. Then strap on that guitar and get ready for the publicity, because you're a novelty, and you might as well capitalize on it.

Fun femme film fest

by Kristen Hutchinson

Video is emerging as a medium for women to express their concerns, rage, humour and creativity. Last weekend's Fun Feminist Film and Video Series provided another example of women talking to their cameras. Just press play.

Shu Lea Cheang's *Colour Schemes* is a low budget video addressing the racism against both women and men that exists in film and the arts—"You're not white for the part," in the workplace and in the U.S. generally.

In *Schemes*, an American Native playing a movie cowboy is told by another actor, "You're an Indian playing a cowboy! Be careful you don't shoot yourself." The actors play games like "Can you identify the model minority?" as a critique of "minority" assimilation.

Sari Red and *Emergence* are two videos by Pratibha Parmar, a British East Indian woman. The first mourns the death of Kalludi Kaur Hayre, a young woman killed in London in 1985. Three men in a van shouted racist and sexist remarks at her, and when Kaur Hayre yelled back she was run down and killed. Police decided against an investigation, claiming no racist motivation. The narrator says, "Death against the wall, blood flowing, staining, cannot be erased, must not be erased."

Emergence concerns women of colour facing the subversion of their culture and the scars of colonialism. Palestinian, and East Asian women read from their poetry, "rising from yesterday's silence to tomorrow's dreams." The poetry empowers and reasserts the experience of women of colour.

A video by Barbara Hammer called *Snow Job* uses video clips to uncover misconceptions about AIDS, linking media coverage with homophobia. One clip reads, "AIDS fear cancels lesbian blood drive."

The series also included three music videos. *Safe Sex Slut* promotes safe sex with lyrics like "I wear seat belts, I don't hang glide, I don't drink insecticides, Safe Sex!" and "The bedroom is the last frontier, condoms make good souvenirs." *Let's Rap* is a funky tune by Montréal's own Freaky Dee. *We're Talking Vulva* is a crazy song about a vagina running around supermarkets and the hairdresser's encouraging women to get acquainted with their private parts.

Another video called the *Orientation Express* uses 50s style cut-outs to ridicule and challenge patriarchy, attacking images of women as unintelligent, nurturing housewives. One scene encourages women to imagine its Jesus Christ coming home from work instead of their husbands. "Smile and say welcome home dear!"

The series also explored issues like prostitution, abortion, and a U.S. politician named Bud who shot himself during a press conference. Women video artists, like Julie Zando who made *Hey Bud*, have faced censorship in the U.S.

Fun Festivals like this one sponsored by the Concordia Women's Collective, let women voice their sexuality and power—to mock, scream, rant, laugh at and rebel against the ties that bind them.

Sex trade workers under attack

by Heidi Modro

Montréal (CUP) — Three years ago, the body of a Montréal sex trade worker was found floating in the Saint Lawrence River. She had been strangled, but the murder was never given much attention, and the murder was never caught.

The case is just one of the many acts of violence that Montréal sex trade workers face on a daily basis.

Tanis, best friend of the victim, says she considers herself lucky, although she has had a gun pointed at her head and a knife on her throat by bad tricks. She has survived many attempted robberies either by clients or muggers who think that prostitutes are easy prey.

Prostitutes and social workers say there isn't a night when a prostitute isn't beaten, raped or robbed in the Montréal area. But, the issue of violence against sex trade workers in Montréal has until now not been seriously addressed either by the MUC police, women's groups or politicians.

"You'll often see girls with scratches on their face or black eyes who'll tell you they had bad dates who got rough. No one gives a damn if a prostitute dies or gets beat up," Tanis says. "I definitely think the problem has been getting worst and worst because no one out there really cares what happens to us."

Alexandre Highcrest, a spokesperson for the Toronto-based Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP) says the issue of violence against prostitutes is linked to the federal courts refusal to decriminalize the profession.

"As long as prostitution will be illegal, you'll have violence against the women. A lot of women are afraid to report any violence and even if they do they're afraid that once they testify in court, they'll be busted for something," Highcrest says. "If the women aren't protected by the law, the men will think they can do with them what they want."

Sylvie Bergeron, a social worker who works for Passages, an outreach organization for young prostitutes, says whenever the police chase the women away from the downtown core, the women are forced to head for more isolated, residential areas.

"Suddenly the women's support network breaks down," she says. "They have no one they can rely on and if something happens to them, no one is around to help them."

Tanis says that for the past few years the police have been trying to get rid of street soliciting in the downtown area.

"Every time the cops try to clean up, there's more violence from the clients," she says.

Before the MCM was elected in 1986, it promised to decriminalize prostitution in the city. But the issue was quietly dropped after it was elected.

"We realized that not only would we not get consensus within the city in this issue, but that we would not get all party members to agree with decriminalization either," Ginette Theriault, an MCM aide to executive committee member Lea Cousineau, said in an interview last

year.

Two years ago, Dans La Rue, a private Montréal outreach organization for street youth, started publishing a bad trick list which lists the incidences of violence by clients. The list details cases involving women who have been raped, robbed or stabbed. It includes physical descriptions of the men and also car license plate numbers.

The bad trick list features descriptions such as this one: "Orange Pinto (around 1975). Curly brown hair, early 30s, small and thin, wears wire rim glasses. Speaks English with accent. Pulls out a big gun. Raped girls for one hour and robbed another girl."

"There's always been a word of mouth system where the women will tell other which clients you have to watch out for," says Marguerite Wiltshire, an outreach worker with Dans La Rue. "We compile all of the cases we hear about and then hand them out."

The police is more often than not of no great help to the women, Wiltshire says.

"You'll have a broad spectrum of reaction. Some will be genuinely sympathetic and take down the information and try to do something," she says. "But the usual response is pretty negative. They just won't go too far out of their way to do anything."

Many police officers have an attitude that if a woman is working on the street, she shouldn't be surprised if something violent happens to her, says Father Emmett Johns, executive director of Dans La Rue.

"A lot of police officers put themselves in the position of judge and jury when it comes to dealing with the women's complaints," he says. "Unless blood is flowing down her face, nothing much happens."

Father Johns approached MUC police director Alain St-Germain and the director of station 33 earlier this winter to ask that the police increase protection for the women.

"The Director talked about putting a special investigator on each shift to take complaints from the women," he says. "There seems to be a change in attitude in the higher ranks, but when you're talking about 4500 officers on the force, not everyone's attitude is going to change all that easily."

MUC police officials were not available for comment.

Meanwhile, most of the women depend on each other for protection. Tanis says that most women have developed a buddy system to help each other out.

"Usually when a girl goes somewhere for a trick, she'll let a friend know where she's gone, so if she disappears, people will know where to look for her," she says. "If one of us goes in a car, one of our friends will take down the license plate numbers."

The incidences of violence against sex trade workers is probably worst in Montréal than it is in Toronto, says Highcrest.

Highcrest says sex trade workers in Montréal are worst off because there is no prostitutes' advocacy group in the city.

"In Toronto, we're trying to build up a whole network where women can get everything from legal advice to safer sex tips," she says. "If the men know that the women are organized and have some kind of backing then the men are less likely to be violent against them."

Two years ago, CORP challenged a 1985 federal law which makes it an offence to communicate in public for prostitution on the basis that it infringed individuals' right to freedom of expression.

And although the Supreme Court recognized the anti-soliciting law contravenes the Charter, it still upheld the law because it believed that it had to keep the streets free of prostitution-related problems.

But CORP is still lobbying to get prostitution decriminalized in Canada.

"Last time it came before the courts, the law was challenged on the basis on freedom of expression," Highcrest says. "This time, we're going to challenge it on the basis that goes against the right of freedom of association."

"We're going to fight until every prostitute is recognized as a business person like any other."



Not quite the real story

by Patty Archer

I've gotten out of the habit of drinking when I talk about it. It was a New Year's resolution, to stop drinking when alone or telling these stories that make me want to gag, how I finally managed to escape. If I drink when I think about it or if I'm drunk when I start telling the stories, I get violent and maudlin and throw my body around and start to shake and I taste salt and usually break something, my glasses or a chair or bruise my leg where it shows. Sometimes I bum smokes, I have to burn myself or something. If I break my glasses I can't see and I start crying and I usually have to get somebody to walk me home. I lose a lot of friends that way.

He's a cheap man, never pays full price for anything, always has to haggle, bargain. It is embarrassing to go into town with him, he'd stop people on the street as they were going into Field's or Robinson's and ask them how much they wanted for their cars. He had 18 Pontiac Strat-o-chiefs from 1965 to 68 among the trees in the yard.

Always had one running, was always looking for parts for it, tinkering with it, trying to find one in slightly better shape. For a good price. Always going for coffee when it rained. "I'm takin the girls to town." He wanted to have us to himself, to stare at our breastless T-shirts and crinkly shorts, turn up the country music on the radio, drive the logging roads with his hands on our shoulders, on our hair, on our legs.

You never take a bath when mom isn't there, she has to be in the kitchen, not out in the yard. If you can't hear her humming shuffling around, you call to her, get her to come in, to wash your hair. If she goes away on a visit, away for two weeks to relatives, you and your sister take turns watching the door, making loud noises, dropping the pot on the stove when he comes in from outside. Now, you have to scrub 15 minutes in the shower after you tell the story.

"Look at these two girls you guys aren't my girls the sharpest little girls there ever was? They're not going to mess with any trashy guys from around here when they grow up" always touching grasping shoulders, pulling arms this way and that, showing his friends in the Golden Latern how soft we were, how malleable, how good and loving and quiet. My stomach lurches every time he touches me, goosebumps, my eyes grow tight and I think he can't touch me here all those people will they know can they see it on my face my face must be dirty.

Holding my breath over bumps when we are in the truck, hoping he'll use both hands on the wheel. I am the oldest. I have to sit next to him, keep as much from her as I can. I close my eyes as he drives, pretend it's

Dimming the red light

by Paula Gunn

Call it a sign of the times.

After years of hard lobbying by women's groups and determined individuals, Mayor Jean Dore's administration announced plans to keep their 1986 election promise and remove porn images from Montreal's streets.

After the provincial go-ahead last December, the city waited until this week to reveal its intentions to regulate the outdoor ads for strip clubs, sex shops, cinemas, and peep shows. The city kicked off Women's Week with a bang — and cashed in on the publicity.

If passed, the by-law will make Montréal the first major centre in Canada to ban pornographic commercial expression. Already at least one group of club owners organizing to fight for their freedom. The Association de Cabarets de Montréal 1991 recently hired lawyer Julius Grey to challenge the by-law's legality.

While the City believes the legislation is constitutional, Grey says he does not think the by-law falls within the 'reasonable limits' placed on the right to freedom of expression in the Charter. The Association says it will go to the Supreme Court if necessary.

The Charter is full of conflicting rights that Supreme Court judges are paid to arbitrate. Neither the freedom of expression nor the right to liberty is absolute — each can be circumscribed in order to protect another individual's security and autonomy. Freedom of expression is notoriously difficult to reconcile with the right of an individual to be free from harm.

McGill law professor Stephen Scott, known for his adamant defense of free expression, holds to the classic liberal view. He says, "It is objectionable that women might be offended or disturbed by something and can then simply lobby enough to get it suppressed. Only demonstration of actual social harm could justify in law such an incursion on freedom."

He added, "To have any kind of free speech, people need to develop thicker skins."

There are two main issues: Does pornography fit the description of the kind of expression to which citizens are said to have a right. And if so, does pornographic expression pose a demonstrable threat to some individuals' security and autonomy that outweighs the liberty of others.

While conservatives leap to ban anything offending their moral values, most liberals compromise between public regulation and private tolerance. Conservative concerns find expression in the obscenity law. The values it represents have found new life in the rise of the New Right.

So vigilance of censorship of expression — "obscene", "pornographic" or otherwise — is crucial.

Anything openly condemned by conservatives is likely to be put behind closed doors by liberals. Failed conservative attempts at prohibition also become regulation. Red Light districts, past and present, embody this answer to 'filth', 'immorality' and 'indecent' — any unsanctioned display of sexuality.

"The original by-law drafted in 1983 was to create a 'red-light district', and put abortion clinics there

too. A 'bad-girl' district was what it was supposed to be," said *Mirror* columnist Paula Synnwich.

Synnwich used to fight against porn, but now she says, "When editorialists and others want to 'clean up the city', I get suspicious. Are we talking about cleaning up misogyny or are we talking about cleaning up sexuality? That's a really important distinction to make."

But not an easy one. The feminist debate on pornography ends up pitting one woman's oppression against another woman's suppression.

Many women feel objectified, degraded and undermined by porn. The proposed by-law represents the official response to their demands. But others consider the increased state-sponsored censorship to be the greater evil.

The chord of dissonance resounds far beyond the seediness of St. Catherine Street. Feminist sexuality debates are as infamous in the feminist world as Montréal's neon sex skyline is in tourism brochures. The sign issue will be played out mainly in the legal arena, especially in the eyes of the mainstream media. But diverse analyses of sexual politics underlie feminist responses to the issue and cannot be ignored. Or covered up.

Synnwich said, "There is a phenomenal amount of censorship out there — now is not the time to start lobbying to hide sexuality."

But one issue which is seldom raised is self-censorship.

Louise Hebert, one of the women instrumental in the successful lobby effort said, "Many women are afraid to even bring up the subject of pornography, we feel so threatened by it. The enthusiastic response that I got to my petition really surprised me. I'd had the impression that I was the only one who was disturbed by pornographic representations of women's sexuality."

Many years of lobbying preceded the petition that Hebert presented to Lea Cousineau. In 1986, an umbrella organization of women's groups called the Montreal Council of Women met with the candidates for mayor to press for action on the sign issue.

Monica Matte, a member of the group's executive, said "Dore is a good talker. He spoke very convincingly but then did nothing during the first mandate."

But petitions, letter-writing and electoral lobbying continued. The efforts of two women, Hebert and Katherine Cukier, were especially important.

Cukier started a petition to have pornographic signs banned. She felt the signs pushed pornography on unwilling consumers, so could be regulated.

Hebert agreed and so began circulating a French version of the petition. Eventually, 5000 women and men signed it.

"The City of Montréal could regulate pornographic signs, even if it can't necessarily decide if pornography is good or bad."



But she added, "The fundamental question is never addressed. We shouldn't rely too much on governments for this. Pornographic images, to varying degrees, have invaded men's minds. All are affected in some way by sexist advertising and pornography."

The action now initiated by Dore's second mandate can be largely explained by this sustained activism. "They finally found a way of getting around the problem of freedom of expression," according to Hebert. "Instead of all businesses having to ban all bodies, only sex businesses are to be prohibited from using the human form or parts of the body."

But the more careful wording of the by-law is not very comforting to anti-censorship feminists. Synnwich said, "There are aspects of pornography that I don't like and I don't know quite what to do with them — but I'm not ready to ban them all. From my own experiences, from seeing what happened when we lobbied for change and just ended up with more censorship, I know who has the most influence, and it's not the feminists."

Synnwich is especially critical how pornography has become a

mainstream feminist obsession. She wonders if it is because pornography is something we can hold in our hands, and say "this is what is wrong."

"Why is that it's only when it's about women's sexuality that people become so concerned about exploitation. Women's bodies are used to sell everything under the sun. If nothing else, you can't help but respect (sex clubs and cinemas) for their honesty."

Rejecting censorship of any kind, Synnwich sees other solutions. "If we're concerned with women's exploitation, let's not attack the sex industry, let's attack women's lack of choices. Pushing the sex trade underground, creating a leper zone, which can only make their living conditions worse, is not the answer. Legalize the sex trade and open up, not cover up the places of business."

One thing in this complex issue is clear. What above all must not be pushed underground is an ongoing, if often fractious discussion of just what constitute the feminism's greatest threat: the potential harm to women engendered in pornography or the encroaching state censorship.

Porn panel

by Pauline Chakravartty

A McGill panel this week showed pornography can be both disturbing and empowering. All four panelists called themselves feminists, though their positions on porn didn't have much in common.

Groupe Intervention Vidéo's Ann Goldin said censorship poses an immense threat for organizations like GIV, a distributor of often-controversial women's films. Recent film funding guidelines endorsed by the U.S. Secretary of State prohibit material dealing with sexual orientation and abortion. Given these restrictions, Goldin asked, "What's a girl to talk about?"

Montréal *Mirror* columnist Paula Synnwich attacked censorship more strongly. Synnwich said she was not a "letter-writing kinda gal." Synnwich referred to herself as a "sexual outlaw" and an "anti-censorship feminist."

Censorship, she said, poses the double threat of silencing and hurting the women who are most marginalized in our misogynist, homophobic, white, middle class society. We can't trust cops, border guards, and judges to censor material according to feminist principles. The result is a "weird" type of censorship, and a monolithic sexuality.

Dorothy Nixon from Media Watch spoke as a feminist consumer activist, objecting to the portrayal of women as sexual commodities. Nixon's message was simple: the mass media should show women as we are — diverse.

Diane Cameron from the Montréal Council of Women said images of violence against women can cause real violence. Cameron argued for censorship of porn, encouraging listeners to lobby for anti-porn legislation.

Despite their differences, the women agreed certain types of porn harm women. Traditional feminism hasn't resolved the sexual oppression of women, but leaving the decision up to the state has worked against feminism's goals.

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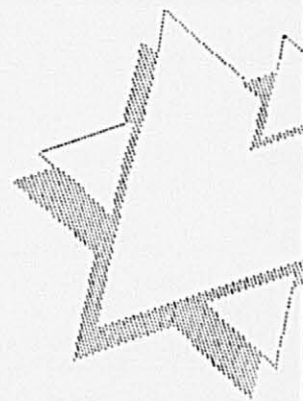
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Montréal women find shelter

by Jennifer Cressey

Two out of every five homicides in Canada involve a husband killing his wife. But government at all levels has failed to acknowledge a problem that affects ten percent of the nation's adults and their children. Police seem more content to wage their "war on drugs" than to address the issue of conjugal violence.

Violence in marriage is an indicator of a society in crisis. But while band-aid solutions to conjugal violence struggle for survival, the root of the problem goes unchecked.

Meanwhile, the beatings and mental abuse go on behind closed doors. Although each week police get countless calls regarding "domestic disputes," and doctors see dozens of emergency patients who have been beaten to unconsciousness, both happen after the fact.

A woman can press charges, or seek assistance at a shelter, but most are not inclined to bring the issue into the open. The majority of battered women are silenced by intimidation or shame.

Trisha Roche, a co-director at one of a dozen downtown women's shelters, was among the few people contacted by the *Daily* who would allow her name to be published.

"It's a really touchy area, and it seems every time personal information is published there's a backlash with graffiti and threats directed at those people," she said.

"But maybe if people knew that 25 percent of married women are hospitalized by their husbands, we could get some support."

Partner psychology

Few relationships ending in violence begin that way.

"If any guy laid a hand on me, I'd end it right there" is a common declaration, often rescinded after the first beating, which usually oc-

curs after the woman is involved, trusting, and vulnerable.

The patterns violent relationships follow are strikingly consistent. The first strike is made in a "disciplinary" action, wherein the man assigns responsibility for his actions to the woman. The allegations are unfounded, but often painful due to an extremely personal nature. Confused and alienated yet "in love", the woman seeks to change herself in order to maintain the relationship.

Then he hits her again, places blame again. It becomes only a matter of time before her self-esteem is so damaged that she feels incapable of leaving yet guilty for staying.

Psychological manipulation can prevent a woman from leaving her husband. Threats of suicide, kidnapping, and harming loved ones are predominant. One shelter employee cited the case of a man who would slip a noose around his wife's neck while she was sleeping, then awaken her to show how easily he could kill her and get away with it.

Though it looks it, the process is not explicitly a game between predator and prey. But the man is using his position to control that which is closest to him, and conveniently most vulnerable.

"The man feels a kind of manifest destiny to control, conquer, and own. When he feels a loss of this 'god-given' power, he seeks some way to regain it," said Roche.

The trap is easily set and difficult to escape. For many abused women, the reassertion of self-esteem is the only hope, but this is made difficult by the abuser. He intercepts mail, disconnects the phone, anything to obstruct the support that may convince her to leave.

Married women face the added legal complication and cost of obtaining a divorce. Most private practice lawyers charge at least \$100 an hour. If the woman does not work, she can apply for legal aid.

But if she does work she must earn less than \$170 per week to be eligible for aid — \$171 won't cut it.

If she is able to get a lawyer, the woman then must go through court proceedings and win her case before she is free. In that time span, the husband has the opportunity to threaten or coerce her into dropping the suit.

It's everywhere

Conjugal violence is not a problem specific to any demographic group, as commonly thought. Every sector of the population, regardless of cultural or economic backgrounds, suffers from it.

"It would be an easier problem to solve if it were based on aberrations. It would also be a less frequent one. But it's not, and it is disturbing that it exists on such a large scale," said Roche.

"Conjugal violence is a social disease, created by a world in which women are more often than not placed in positions of subservience and used to vent anger," she said.

But there is very little in the way of social aid for this social disease. Underfunding is the most common complaint of shelters. With upcoming cuts to social services in the federal budget, matters are expected to worsen.

Elizabeth Harper is director of the Regroupement des maisons d'hébergement et de transition pour femmes victimes de violence, an umbrella group for Quebec's 46 women's shelters. Harper is disheartened by the organization's lack of progress in gaining more funds.

"The network of women's shelters is extremely well-run, as are the shelters themselves. The problem is, we have to turn five women away for every two we can house. Forty-six shelters sounds like a lot, but most of them accommodate no more than nine or ten women with children."

The shelters themselves are comfortable and clean. All of downtown Montréal's shelters provide free room, board, and counselling for women victimized by violence. People who work there say that psychiatric care is the most important thing shelters offer. Re-



building self-esteem and reestablishing the ability to trust people, especially men, is difficult.

Shelters provide extensive personal and group counselling sessions and give the necessary support to allow these women to start again.

"What they need most is to talk about what has been done to them with women who have been through the same thing. There is such a feeling of loneliness that can be created in these situations. When the women come together, they can see that they are not alone, and there is hope," said Roche.

Some shelters are also beginning to provide counselling services for the children of abused women, a recent and important advance. Children can suffer extreme emotional crises, and without treatment tend to repeat the cycle of violence later in their own lives.

Montréal shelters are trying to

further involve the community through funding and activism, but to little avail.

"Terri", an administrator at a downtown shelter, recalled a funding drive two years ago. "Our posters were defaced and the phone line we had hooked up especially for donations had to be disconnected. We raised less than two thousand dollars."

Roche said, "All we can do is lobby for the money to help these women and get involved with developing the equality that would eliminate the problem altogether."

Anyone interested in getting involved with women's shelters and against conjugal violence can contact Regroupement des maisons d'hébergement et de transition pour femmes victimes de violence. It can be contacted through S.O.S. Violence Conjugale, a 24-hour referral service.

Arab women look out window at war

by Lina Saigol

So, you think the war is over because the men are coming home? While war does not distinguish between men and women, many of the dead and injured in Iraq and Kuwait have inevitably been women and children.

Yolande Geadah, of Egyptian and Palestinian descent, is a researcher in Arab women's studies. She said, "With all the infrastructure now destroyed in Iraq, life has regressed a century, and it is the women at home who feel this the most."

In the Western propaganda, only the weaknesses of Iraq have been shown to the Western public, Geadah said. "While the condition of women isn't marvelous, nothing is ever mentioned about concrete

realizations, such as Iraq having achieved the highest literacy rate out of any Arab nation.

"Saudi Arabia, of course, is the one Arab nation in the worse condition with regard to the rights of women, and yet isn't it ironic that it is the country the Americans chose to save?" said Geadah.

And has the west forgotten, asks Geadah, that the war in the Gulf has caused money in Canada to be diverted away from social use and toward military funding?

Nawal Halawa is a Palestinian journalist living in Canada. She recently came back from a peace forum, organized by a Tunisian women's union. The motto of the conference was, "Let's work in a way that tolerance, moderation and friendliness between the peoples

prevail over the passion."

At the conference, one of the most horrific incidents of the Gulf War was recounted by Najla Yassin, the President of The Arab Women's Conference.

In response to the economic sanctions against Iraq, a group of Arab women set up a Peace Boat, to travel from Algeria to Yemen via the Suez canal. The boat was carrying supplies like baby milk and medicine for the trapped women and children in Iraq. On December 26, the women on board awoke to find two helicopters full of American Marines hovering above.

Yassin spoke of the horror the marines inflicted upon the peace party. With their faces painted black, they beat the women with their machine guns, too cowardly

to shoot them. "They tore sign declaring statements of peace and threw tear gas at us. For 18 days we lived surrounded by them on the boat. The women and children were becoming sick with the rapid decrease of supplies. Finally, we contacted the Amman ambassador by radio, but we were told we could not pass through to Iraq but must disembark in Sudan."

"How many women and children have lost their lives and will be psychologically scarred from incidents such as this? And how shocking is it that the West has silenced such horrors?"

Halawa, in discussing one of the major women's movements of Kuwait (Al Gamaha Al Nissaia Al Thagafia) explained the importance of working women in Kuwait.

"Kuwaiti women are very serious about building a women's movement in their country. They provide kindergartens for working women and organize relief aid, orphanages etc."

She said although there is no political voice from Kuwaiti women, Palestinian refugees and Algerians have "a very strong reaction for lobbying media and raising money for their people."

Arab women want to fight peace with dignity, not arms. While the political voice of women has a long way to go in gaining any resonance, there is progress.

But in war, be it Middle Eastern or not, women and children will suffer, watching an empty or occupied country through their win-

EVENTS

Thursday 7 March

25 artists show in an Art History Students Association art exhibition. FREE. Union Ballroom, 3480 McTavish. 10h-17h.

Caribbean lunch special and music. Union cafeteria. 11h-14h.

The Religious Studies' Sproule Lecture on Ethics and Public Responsibility continues with Vanderbilt U's Jean Bethke Elshtain talk on "Sovereignty, Identity and Sacrifice". FREE. FDA Auditorium. 12h.

"The Guanche Mummy, Sir William Dawson and Early Anthropology" is a Redpath Museum Seminar by Barbara Lawson. FREE. Museum Auditorium. 15h.

Israeli Journalist Daniel Ben-simon and representatives from the Daily and the Concordia Link join in a panel discussion called "Gulf War and the Media". FREE. Leacock 232. 15h.

"The acquisition of scrambling in Japanese and related matters" is a talk by Keio U and MIT's Yukio Otsu. FREE. Bronfman 597. 16h.

"Ritual and History: Rethinking Contemporary Northwest Coast Ceremonialism" is a talk by Dartmouth College's Sergei Kan. FREE. Leacock 738. 16h30.

Journalist and author Robert Kuttner speaks on "The Social Construction of Markets". FREE. Concordia U, 2149 Mackay, basement lounge. 17h.

"Who Gets In?" is an NFB film presented by WUSC McGill. FREE. Union B09, 3480 McTavish. 17h30.

"The Legal Issues of Sexual Assault" is an information seminar by Crown Attorney Laurie Weitzman and MUC Police's Sgt. Det. John Gauthier. FREE. Stewart Bio S1/4. 18h.

More religious studies as Jean Bethke Elshtain continues the Sproule Lecture with "Freedom and Responsibility in a World Come of Age: Lessons from Bonhoeffer". FREE. FDA Auditorium. 18h30.

DeNiro, Depardieu, Sutherland and Lancaster star in the Film Society's presentation of Bertolucci's 70s epic "1900". \$1.00 members and seniors. \$3.00 general. Leacock 132. 19h30.

Have greatness thrust upon you. Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" continues today. \$5.00 students and seniors. \$8.00 general. Tickets at Sadie's. Info: 398-6795. 20h.

Anti-War Almost Woman's Day Benefit Acoustic Cabaret, Librairie Alternative, \$4.00 donation, 20h00.

Armenian Students Association is having a dance. FREE. Thompson House. 21h.

Friday 8 March

International Women's Day

"Stop the War Against the Poor" is a demonstration making the link between militarism and poverty followed by a march. Info: 345-5706. Complexe Guy-Favreau, 200 René Lévesque. 7h30.

Saturday 9 March

"Colourful Rythms" is a Caribbean Students show with steelpans, dancing, drama, more. \$4.00 kids. \$6.00 advance, general. \$7.00 door. Info Mark 284-5555 or Maxine 939-9605. Westmount High Auditorium, 4350 Ste Catherine West. 18h45.

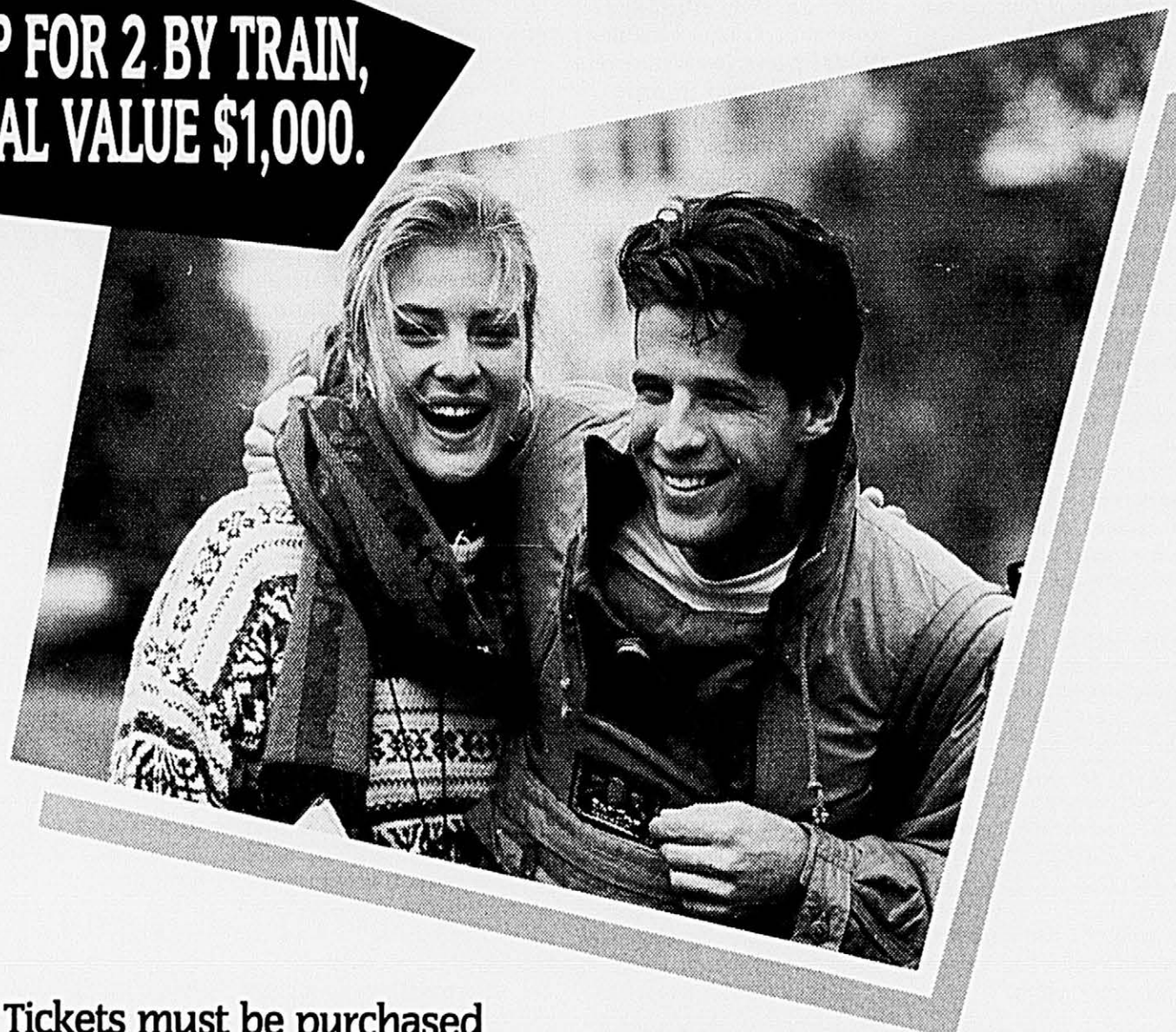
FilmSoc presents "Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl". \$1.00 members and seniors. \$3.00 general. Leacock 132. 19h30.

"Twelfth Night" ...see above. 20h.

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The McGill Film Society annual executive election. All positions open. Tuesday March 19th, Leacock 26, 6-9 pm. Information and nomination forms available at screenings or Union 432 (398-6825).

Red Herring jello bake-off: pick up the stuff at kiosk on the 8th and return it to be judged on 11th. Fab prizes! 398-6816.

This week at St. Martha's ... second part of the film "Mass Appeal" and potluck brunch following 10:30 am worship Sunday. 3521 University, basement, The United Theological College. Everyone welcome! 398-4104.

Psychologists studying personality in male university students. Are you an adventurous, carefree person who has led an exciting impulsive life? Would you do almost anything for a dare? or Are you a cautious reserved person who enjoys being alone? Do you think things through carefully before making decisions? If you fit either description please call 398-6109 (leave number). Modest payment.

Yelp! Yelp! Red Herring deadline March 11th! This means you should submit stuff that will make people laugh. Union 406, 398-6816.

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by Shannon Dodge

Live Exotic Conversation with Sweet and Sexy Girls and Guys. Aphrodite Erotic or Dominant Phone Sessions. All Fetishes Accepted. Also Two Girls Together.

There are ads like these in most papers enticing readers to pick up the phone for an instant electronic turn-on.

Phone sex. It's the ultimate in safe sex, it's completely legal, and it comes in all persuasions — for a fee, of course.

According to phone sex operators, most clients are men who want a woman to sweet-talk them along to orgasm.

Phone sex comes in two basic varieties: recorded erotic messages and live phone sex. Whether you're gay or straight, there's phone sex out there for you.

Many ads offer "sweet and sexy guys and girls" to both "ladies and gentlemen." Some services cater expressly to gay men; if the ad doesn't specify, the service usually offers women operators to men.

The recordings, usually "976" exchanges, offer several options to those with a touch-tone phone: "For hot lovers Nana and Lori, press 1. For our daring dominatrix Alexis, press 2. For our naughty schoolgirl Nancy, press 3. And for the seductions of schoolteacher Deborah, press 4. And to tell us about your own hot fantasies, press 5."

To hear a 2-3 minute recording, callers pay a flat fee of about \$3.00, which shows up on their telephone bill. Unless you are turned on by a squealing and heavy breathing Texas accent, it may not be worth the money. Farfetched scenarios

and downright silly lines ("Let's slide our tongues into his mouth *most suggestively*") may seem more hilarious than erotic.

Then there's live phone-sex, the choice of more adventurous, and well-off clients.

'Selina', currently a McGill student, had theatre training that worked to her advantage when she was a phone sex operator five years ago. She couldn't find a decent job working out of her Montréal apartment, so she took on another persona for a few hours a night.

Selina began her calls by describing the physique she'd invented for her character, and then asking the caller a little about himself. Professionals, students, the odd McGill prof, and business travellers calling from their hotel rooms made up most of her clientele.

A few phone-sex callers just want someone to talk to, but the vast majority basically want to be turned on as they jack off. "The weirdest thing I've ever heard," said Selina, "is a guy cumming over the telephone." She was paid relatively well — \$10 per 15-minute call.

'Chantal Mouffe' was the phone name of an American university student who answered an ad in a local paper for phone sex operators. She was hired on the spot, with no training.

Chantal worked out of her apartment and the company forwarded calls to her home. She characterized most of the clients as "super-nervous, tongue-tied, and unimaginative." So she tried to be creative.

But after two weeks she found the work was less lucrative than she



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had expected — about \$8 to \$10 an hour. Chantal soon quit out of boredom, saying the only good thing about doing phone sex was the flexibility to work your own hours and out of your own home. Erotic fantasies soon become so humdrum that operators simultaneously do homework, clean their rooms, or watch TV with the sound down, she said.

The only "gross" call she took in her two-week stint was from a man who was obviously calling from a pay phone and getting off in public.

Selina, on the other hand, felt that a handful of her callers were truly sick and ought to be reported to the police. She occasionally was asked to act out "golden showers", or S/M games in which the caller was whipping her with chains.

Company policy allowed her to hang up if callers got verbally abusive. Once a caller's girlfriend was giving him a blowjob while Selina talked to him. Selina ended the call because she felt it was degrading to the girlfriend.

Chantal said phone sex expresses the true depersonalization of sexual intimacy. Selina disagreed. Comparing phone sex to prostitution, she said it demands an attempt at intimacy because it depends completely on communication.

But while she enjoyed having power over the man on the other end of the line, Selina said she later came to feel she was perpetuating a myth of women existing to give men sexual gratification, regardless of their own feelings or pleasure.

It's cheap, it's soft, it's re-usable, it's a sponge!

by Valerie Renwick

Women bleed. Once a month, as part of our cycle, we shed the lining of our womb, leaving the problem of how to deal with our menstrual blood. Most women use tampons, pads, or a combination of the two. But there is another option that many women aren't familiar with — menstrual sponges.

Sponges can be used to catch menstrual flow, then rinsed and re-used every month. Natural sea sponges or artificial make-up sponges are readily available in health food and drug stores, costing four to six dollars. You can either buy one that's the right size, or buy a larger one and cut it to a size that fits your vagina.

Once the sponge has been bought, it should be boiled once to make sure it is sterile. To use the sponge, wet it, squeeze it out and insert it into the vagina with your fingers. It should be far enough in so that it won't irritate the opening of the vagina, but not so far that it can't be reached to take it out. Some women tie a piece of dental floss around it, leaving the end hanging out for easy removal.

The sponge will become saturated within one to four hours,

depending on the size of the sponge and the heaviness of the flow. When your flow is light, there may be some irritation from the friction.

Remove and rinse the sponge with cold water before re-inserting. Some women don't like to rinse their sponge in public. You can always carry an extra in a plastic bag, and put the used sponge in the

bag to rinse out later in private. When the sponge is not being used, store it in a dry, clean place.

Sponges have many advantages. They're cheap. The initial cost of buying one is much less than the accumulated cost of buying pads and tampons which can't be re-used. Sponges are environmentally friendly, not bleached or perfumed,

and do not irritate or damage the vagina. Because they're re-usable (lasting four to six months), they produce almost no waste.

And when we refuse to buy pads and tampons, we are refusing to be dependent on multi-nationals that produce them and keep the price high.

Be careful with natural sponges grown in the Mediterranean — they may contain traces of pollutants from the water. Also, artificial sponges may contain chemicals that could irritate the vagina. Like tampons, sponges shouldn't be worn for long periods of time, which increases the chances of toxic shock syndrome.

Immaculate sexless conception

by Colleen Wiegiers

Not all women have sex to become mothers.

Louise, a lesbian, gave birth to a baby girl eight months ago through a live sperm donor program.

Louise wanted to have a child but, due to her lesbian partner's beliefs, decided against intercourse with a man. "The so-called natural way, find a guy and have intercourse, would have jeopardized the relationship," she said.

Susan (not her real name) also believes that the intervention of a man in a lesbian relationship jeopardizes much more than the relationship. "Society defines homosexuals as unnatural because they can't procreate," she said. Susan

plans to have a child in the future but is not even considering sex with a man as an option.

Louise had some trouble finding an appropriate program. She was first directed to Dr. Togas Tulandi at The Jewish General Hospital's fertility clinic but found the experience disappointing. Louise said the clinic does not accept single women. "I was told, 'Very sorry, I can't do anything for you. The policy of the Jewish General is based on religious and moral beliefs.'"

"The Jewish General didn't want to deal with women outside of a married (heterosexual) couple," Louise said.

In an interview this week, Tulandi's receptionist said they did

not have a strict policy but added, "At one time they (single mothers) would be told no." However the office is "not sure of the policy dealing with single mothers today."

Louise was then referred to a second doctor who interviewed her, stating her sexual preference and status were not issues. She was asked questions about financial backing and her expectations of children. "He (the doctor) doesn't make judgements on the reason why a woman wants to have a baby," she said.

After being accepted into the program Louise was matched with a donor through a computer numbering system. The only criterion was skin colour. "There are no legal

implications for the donor... donors are numbers on a computer," she said.

The donors for the live sperm program were male medical interns.

After three months of sessions, Louise became pregnant. The sessions involved two visits a month at fifty dollars each visit. Louise had been charting her cycle so she knew when she was ovulating and could minimize the number of visits.

As a lesbian mother, Louise does not receive any special status. She is treated like a single mother and receives the same benefits under the health care program. Her partner cannot claim Louise or the child under income tax.